

International Academic Competitions

International History Bowl & International Academic Bowl Official Online Rules Summary

This document is intended as an outline of the rules of the competition. Note that the rules for the History Bowl and Academic Bowl are identical. In History and Academic Bowl matches, players will be playing as a team of up to four players at once against another team of up to four players at once in a game that consists of four quarters. Students will hear a series of tossups, bonuses, and category-based questions.

Please note the following generalities:

- At no point in the course of the games for the Bowl will players be deducted points for an incorrect answer.
- Players may substitute members of their team between quarters of play. In the 3rd quarter, substitutions must be made before the categories are announced.
- If players wish to protest a question or answer, **they must bring it to the moderator's attention before the first question of the next quarter is read, or before they leave the room at the end of the fourth quarter.** If the moderator botches a question (this does not involve pronunciation, which is not protestable unless it clearly misleads the wording of a question), there are makeup questions with each round that can be used. Only students actively competing on a team who are playing in that quarter and one designated coach per team (if present in the room during the match) can protest.
- During any tossup (i.e., buzzer) question, students may not confer verbally or in writing with their teammates. They may raise their hand, extend their buzzer, or gesture in a clear and single way that indicates they know the answer, but not convey what the answer itself is or any further clue to it, nor can they write notes while a tossup is being read. Only the student who rings in can answer a question; they cannot designate a teammate to answer for them.
- On second quarter bonuses and the third quarter questions talking to one's teammates is permitted and encouraged. Conferring illegally with teammates on a buzzer question will be treated as if a player buzzed in and answered the tossup incorrectly.
- If a student starts giving an answer who has not buzzed, that team is disqualified from the question, and the other team gets a chance to ring in regardless of what the first person who talked said. Ideally, moderators should catch this before saying correct or incorrect and just say "I'm sorry you spoke out of turn, I'll continue for the other team" but if a moderator does say correct, the backup question is read alone to the other team. If the moderator says incorrect, they finish the same question for the other team and do not go to the backup.

The first quarter consists of eight or ten (usually, 8 are played in middle / elementary school rounds, and 10 are played in varsity / junior varsity rounds, but certain tournaments may deviate from this standard) relatively short buzzer questions worth 10 points each for a correct answer. If one player rings in and answers incorrectly, neither that player nor anyone else on their team can ring in again on that question. After a player has rung in, they have three seconds to start giving

their answer. After three seconds, a team can keep speaking without pausing but they cannot pause at that point. If a team is incorrect while answering during the question, and the question has not been finished, the moderator does not go back to the start of the question, but picks up from where they had left off.

At the end of the question, the moderator counts to five, then calls time if no one buzzes. If one team rings in after the question and gets it wrong, if the other team is still alive (i.e. they haven't answered incorrectly), then they get three seconds to buzz in regardless of how much time the first team took to ring in.

If one team buzzes after the question has been read to completion and is incorrect, the other team (as long as they have not yet answered incorrectly) then receives a fresh five second count after the moderator says "Incorrect" to the first team regardless of how much time the first team took.

Moderators do not prompt for an answer on buzzer questions at all, and they simply count to themselves; they do not need a timer. All timing decisions throughout the match are at the discretion of the moderator and are not protestable.

These rules on reading and timing hold for all buzzer questions, including second quarter, fourth quarter, and tiebreaker questions.

For all questions throughout the match, regardless of what style, once a player begins to speak, players can go back and correct themselves (e.g. "Lincoln, I mean Washington") until the moderator indicates they are correct or not, though once the moderator has started ruling (and they should rule quickly), the answer will be taken as the moderator thought the player answered; players cannot protest this. On any question, players may give extra information if it doesn't make the answer wrong (e.g. saying "Vienna, Austria" even if "Vienna" would suffice or "Hamlet by Shakespeare") but they cannot "go fishing" (e.g. "Hapsburg Empire, Maria Theresa, Schloss Schonbrunn, Vienna!"). If they provide extra information that is incorrect (e.g. "George Shakespeare" or "Vienna, Slovakia") then the answer is deemed incorrect.

The second quarter consists of eight tossup questions worth 10 points each for a correct answer. If a team answers one of these correctly, that team will be entitled to one bonus question, which is also worth 10 points. If neither team gets the buzzer question, neither team hears the bonus. In this quarter, the other team also cannot "steal" or "rebound" the bonus; our bonuses do not "bounce back".

At online tournaments, on bonus questions, the moderator should prompt for the answer **eight** seconds after having finished reading, and then allow an extra **five** seconds for the team to start giving an answer. At online tournaments, someone on the team should say "Final" or "Final answer" or otherwise make abundantly clear what their answer is so that the moderator is not confused if they are still conferring or giving their final answer (though if they neglect to do this and it's unclear what a team's answer is, the moderator should please ask them directly to clarify. They do not disqualify the team on the question if they don't say "final", but should remind them to say "Final" or be perfectly clear before giving their answer next time.)

The third quarter consists of category rounds. In preliminary rounds, the team that is trailing will have a choice from three categories. If the teams are tied, then the team that was most recently trailing picks first. In the playoffs, this reverses, and the team that was in the lead picks first (or the team most recently in the lead if the teams were tied). Each category has a theme and 8 or 6 short questions fitting the theme (usually, 6 questions are played in middle / elementary school rounds, and 8 are played in varsity / junior varsity rounds, but certain tournaments may deviate from this standard).

The category rounds is not timed, but rather, the questions in the category a team chooses, are read to the team one at a time. For each question, the team that first hears the question gets **eight** seconds to confer, then a prompt (e.g. "answer

please”) then **five** seconds to begin giving their answer, after which they cannot pause. The buzzers are not used during this quarter, and team members may confer on all questions. Teams may pass questions, but cannot come back to them.

If the first team gets an answer wrong or time is called, then the other team gets an immediate chance to answer. At that point, the moderator does not reveal the answer or reread the question to the second team. The moderator says “incorrect” or “bounceback” and then the other team then gets **eight** seconds to confer, and then a prompt, and then **five** seconds to start giving their answer, just like the first team. Then the first team goes back to their next question, etc.

As on bonus questions, the reader takes the first answer from anyone on the team clearly directing an answer at them. The reader can ask a team to clarify if needed. If time runs out, a student who is actively directing an answer at the reader may finish giving the answer, but a player cannot start an answer after time runs out.

If the first team cuts off the reader mid-question and gives an incorrect answer, the other team does not hear the remainder of the question on the bounceback. A team can choose to kill the category at any point (at which point, the reader stops reading and does not read the remaining questions), but even if they kill the category prior to the reader starting to read the first question, the other team still is entitled to hear the first question on the bounceback.

If a team sweeps the category, they receive a 20 point bonus. This can also happen on the bouncebacks, if the first team misses all the questions, and the second team answers all the questions correctly. Once the first team is finished, and the second team has heard the bouncebacks, then the process reverses, and the second team selects their category, and the first team hears the bouncebacks from the ones they missed.

If the reader inadvertently blurts out the answer, or otherwise botches the question, then a replacement question (identical in number to the botched question in the order the questions are read, as they ascend in difficulty from 1 to 6 or 8) from the third unchosen category is read after both teams have selected and been read their categories and the teams have heard the corresponding bouncebacks.

The fourth quarter consists of 8 longer buzzer questions worth **thirty**, **twenty**, or ten points each for a correct answer depending at what point in the question the question is answered. On the question sheets, **bold and underlined indicates a point in the question where it is worth thirty points**. **bold only indicates where it is worth twenty points**. Regular text indicates where it is worth ten points.

At the end of the game, if it is tied, a tiebreak buzzer question is used to break the tie, though it only determines who wins the match, the tiebreaker itself has no point value (e.g., officially a game could still end 200-200, with one team receiving a win). If no one gets the tiebreak, additional buzzer questions are used (moderators, ask in the staff room if you need one, do not read the backup bonus question provided as a tiebreak). Tiebreakers are used as needed until one team gets one right.

Rules Regarding Cheating and Conduct

Cheating is absolutely prohibited and teams that cheat are subject to immediate disqualification from the tournament. This includes illegal conferring among teammates that is not inadvertent, accessing outside resources, and other obvious situations where a clear and unfair advantage is being obtained.

IAC proctors and tournament staff at all times have the right to assess any penalty with the exception of a ban from the tournament of a player or team at any point without further recourse to protest. In the event that a ban from the tournament is considered, then the situation will be explained to the Tournament Director(s), who can choose to assess penalties including disqualification from the tournament and possibly subsequent events upon consultation with other IAC staff members. The Tournament Directors may consult with team members, coaches, proctors, match officials, or others as necessary in the investigative process.

IAC tournament officials and their designees (but not moderators) reserve the right at all times to assess penalties including, but not limited to, banning a particular student from a quarter, the match, or the tournament; deducting points on a question or questions; having a team forfeit a match; or having a team forfeit the tournament.

Supremacy Clauses

Note that if there is a discrepancy between the Official Rules file and what is on this summary, then it is this summary that in fact takes precedence. The file, accessible on the rules section of the IAC USA website at www.iacompetitions.com/resources/ labeled “Official Conventions, Precedents, and Standards for Answer Acceptance,” is also considered to be an official part of the Official Rules for the purposes of the tournament.

As always, International Academic Competitions reserves the right to at all times make non-protestable executive decisions in the best interest of the tournament to handle situations that are not explicitly discussed in this summary or the Official Rules. This is particularly true for issues involving internet connectivity, the buzzer, or other peculiarities of running tournaments online. Questions on the rules, or on any aspect of the tournament should be directed to info@iacompetitions.com.